

Weakness or War

Consensus of so-called "informed" opinion is that the reshuffle of the Soviet upper echelon is a sign of Soviet weakness and that there is serious trouble internally. It is a curious fact, however, that in this country this "informed" opinion all seems to stem from those individuals who must bear the responsibility for cutting our defense expenditures and for the assurance that America can have more defense for less money.

There has always been serious internal trouble in the Soviet Union in so far as food production, consumer goods, housing and other comforts for the people are concerned. In fact, wherever the communists take over these internal troubles develop as the economy is shifted to heavy industry and armaments.

If men like Secretary of Defense Wilson had the sole responsibility for defending our country, his blooper that this present situation is "just another little ripple" might be terrifying. But, he exists in a chronic contortion with his foot in his mouth, and the Congress fortunately feels some responsibility for maintaining effective military establishments.

To dismiss the Soviet upheaval as a sign of weakness is rash. It could mean the first move by Soviet leaders to mobilize the communist world for the war that is inevitable to crush the last strong bastion of the capitalist world—the United States.

We cannot say that is what it does mean, but no one can say that it isn't ominous. Men like General Walter Bedell Smith, no longer directly in government and no longer gagged, say that it is all very ominous, and with no equivocation.

It is agreed that Khrushchev is solidly backed by the marshals of the Red army, and that Bulganin is only their political mouthpiece. If there is a crisis in the Soviet Union it is a crisis in which the Red army demands extraordinary supplies of weapons and other war materiel. The crisis has ominous undertones, such as arming East German Peoples Republic and Red China.

It would be far more reassuring if our own leaders and policy makers had shared Churchill's reserved statement that the future is veiled in obscurity, but, had directed Americans in the meantime to stand by their guns and keep the powder dry.